

Environmental Guidelines for Urban and Rural Land Development in British Columbia



Are you planning any development on your property? If your property includes, or is near to Mountain Beaver habitat, this fact sheet will provide you with important information about complying with the law and protecting this species while still benefiting from the enjoyment and value of your property.

Mountain Beavers are actually not beavers, but a primitive rodent found in the Fraser Valley and the southern Cascade Mountains of British Columbia. They get their name from their habit of cutting small limbs off trees, although they also feed on herbaceous plants, ferns, and shrubs. Mountain Beavers are primarily nocturnal and spend most of their time underground, where they build complex tunnel systems in deep, moist soils. After foraging aboveground, they cut plants into smaller sections before bringing them into the burrow for eating, caching, or use as nesting material.

Mountain Beavers require an abundant source of water, as they have inefficient kidneys and need to drink a third

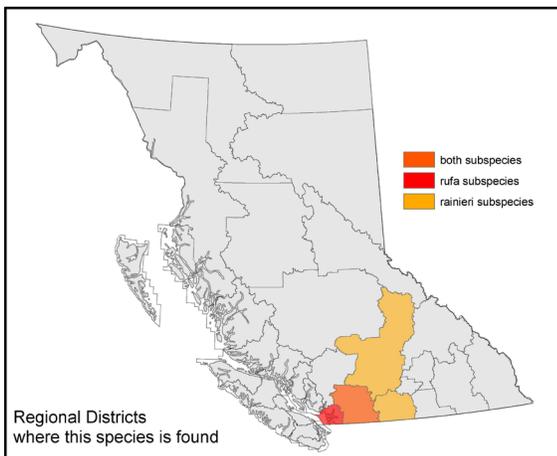
of their body weight every day. Their burrows provide habitat for many other species, including salamanders, deer mice, moles, weasels, and skunks. For more information see http://www.geog.ubc.ca/biodiversity/factsheets/pdf/Aplodontia_rufa.pdf.

AT RISK

Expanding urban and rural development is threatening the survival of the Mountain Beaver. You can help these enigmatic animals through careful planning of any developments or activities located near Mountain Beaver habitat.

LEGALLY PROTECTED

Mountain Beavers are considered to be of **Special Concern** in British Columbia due to its susceptibility to human activities. Under the B.C. Wildlife Act, it is an offense to kill, wound, hunt, or transport Mountain Beavers without a permit. If you wish to engage in construction activities that may injure or kill these animals, you must obtain a permit from **FrontCounter BC**.



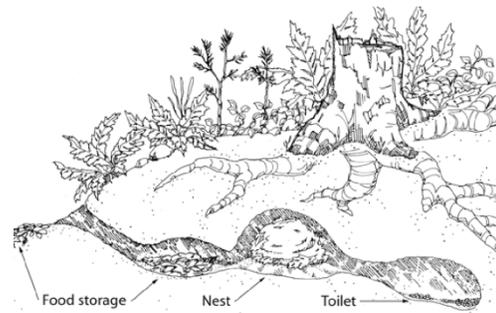
DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

More detailed guidelines for protecting Environmentally Valuable Resources are provided in *Develop with Care 2014: Environmental Guidelines for Urban and Rural Land Development in British Columbia*.

- ☑ Identify Mountain Beaver habitats before planning developments. Use the “Inventory Methods for Mountain Beaver, Bushy-tailed Woodrat & Porcupine” for detailed instructions. Careful design and construction can help you to avoid liability issues.
- ☑ Establish a buffer (at least 50 m wide) around Mountain Beaver colonies, tunnels and burrows. Fence the habitat and buffer area to keep dogs (and cats) away.
- ☒ Avoid using heavy machinery for land clearing within the buffer, as machines compress the soil and destroy tunnels. Maintain suitable Mountain Beaver habitat in adjacent areas. Juveniles will disperse up to 500 m away from the birth den.
- ☒ Avoid fragmentation of habitat by roads, trails, and other infrastructure.
- ☑ Maintain pre-development groundwater recharge patterns and volume, especially in headwater areas where the soil/water balance, and headwater stream base flows are particularly vulnerable. This will retain the moisture-loving plants that Mountain Beavers eat, and will ensure that their tunnels and chambers stay cool and humid.

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
	Courtship / Breeding										
		2-4 Pups born									
Active all year, juveniles leave den late summer											

Mountain Beavers construct complex tunnel systems with special chambers for nesting, feeding, storing food, and holding wastes. Drawing by Jennifer Rees



- ☒ Do not construct stormwater detention ponds within Mountain Beaver habitats. These ponds concentrate pollutants over time, and the toxins will be ingested by animals that feed on plants in the ponds. The ponds may also flood the tunnels.
- ☒ Avoid landscaping with invasive plants that could encroach into the Mountain Beavers' foraging areas. These plants may not be suitable food for the beavers.



Mountain Beaver hole

For more information:

Develop with Care 2014: Environmental Guidelines for Urban and Rural Land Development in British Columbia
<http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/wld/documents/bmp/devwithcare/>

Inventory Methods for Mountain Beaver, Bushy-tailed Woodrat & Porcupine
<http://www.for.gov.bc.ca/hts/risc/pubs/tebiodiv/beaver/index.htm>

Riparian Areas Regulation: http://www.env.gov.bc.ca/habitat/fish_protection_act/riparian/riparian_areas.html

FrontCounter BC (<http://www.frontcounterbc.gov.bc.ca/>) or contact 1-877-855-3222